

2009 Voters Guide



The League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford

www.lwvgh.org

Responses by question:

2. Can West Hartford maintain a quality school system without a budget increase next year assuming no increase from state aid? Explain.

Andrew Bannon-Guasp

Yes, with quality instruction and a sound curriculum we can.

Ellen Brassil

Yes, especially through effective instructional strategies, our outstanding teachers and curriculum.

Elin Katz

No one can predict what comes next in this economy. We are fortunate that last year the Board of Education was able to preserve programs vital to our students' development without an increase in the budget. Realistically, no school system can maintain quality over the long term without some budget increases to address the rising cost of energy, supplies, staffing, and other essentials. In the short term, we don't know what challenges the next budget cycle will bring, but I will work with stakeholders to once again maintain school excellence while living within our means.

Clare Kindall

Due to the drastic economic times, my Board colleagues and I adopted a zero percent budget increase last year, while maintaining programs. This was possible only because everyone pulled together – unions gave concessions, students and staff engaged in a successful energy conservation program, and the Town Council and Board worked together throughout the budgeting process. In the long term, it is not possible to maintain quality schools without an increase in the school budget. In the short term however, as long as the community pulls together, our school system will endure this fiscal crisis.

Naogan Ma

I have been a resident of West Hartford for more than twenty years. I have seen our property taxes increase and school budget cut. It is painful but necessary to continue to maintain our quality schools. Just like our own family budget in hard times, however, we have to spend our money more carefully. In the last budget cycle, the board faced extremely challenging economic reality. The board worked with the town council to preserve programs. When budget is tight, it is vital to focus on our priorities.

Lib Spinella

Yes. High spending never guarantees high results. Quality instruction and cost effective practices in our schools count the most.